

Task A.2 School/Class Overview

I am a Special Education teacher in a public high school. I teach two sections of Resource and two sections of a 200 level Special Education English course combined for ninth and tenth graders with learning disabilities. I also team-teach a 200 level tenth grade regular education English class with a Regular Education teacher. My portfolio will focus on two students in one of my combined ninth and tenth grade Special Education English classes.

In order to be enrolled in this Special Education English class, students must be identified as needing Special Education services. Initial placement is made by PPT recommendation, and language arts goals and objectives are written to meet each student's specific learning needs. Progress towards meeting the goals and objectives is reported quarterly and students receive standard quarterly grades, as well as mid-quarter progress reports. Students are evaluated on the basis of quizzes, tests, projects, homework, writing samples of varying length, and class participation.

The course is intended for students who possess basic skills, but need to refine these skills through more complex reading and writing. Most of the students in the class have been identified as having a specific learning disability or as being language impaired. Attention is individualized, and the pace of tasks is determined by the needs of students. Alternative texts and materials, designed to assist students in the acquisition of new skills, are utilized. The curriculum of the course is designed to incorporate student IEP goals and objectives in order to meet the individual needs of students, but also attempts to parallel mainstream curricular expectations whenever possible.

There is one paraprofessional in the class. Her duties fluctuate depending on the class activity. She provides class notes for a student who has difficulty writing, and she floats when students are working independently, providing assistance in the form of rewording questions, redirecting attention, and clarifying instructions. The paraprofessional is operating the camera during the videotaped sessions.

APPENDIX T.2

Student Description Form		
Data to identify	Student A	Student B
Age	15	16
Grade	9 th	10 th
Disability(ies)	Specific learning disability Concerns: Basic reading, reading comprehension, written expression	Speech and Language impaired
Total hours per week that you provide instruction to student	3.8	3.8
IEP Goal(s) related to learning segment	Student will demonstrate continued improvement in writing skills as demonstrated by the following objectives.	Given a variety of topics, student will write three and five paragraph essays with introductions, conclusions, and supporting paragraphs.
IEP Objectives related to the goal of learning segment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student will independently use outlines and graphic organizers as a pre-writing organizational strategy. 2. The student will independently write an introduction to an essay providing a lead and thesis statement. 3. The student will independently provide three supportive details for each topic given, and include elaboration for these details. 4. The student will, with teacher assistance, identify three to four errors in spelling, punctuation, or sentence structure. 5. Using a thesaurus, the student will vary one or two word choices in each written piece. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student will write paragraphs six to ten sentences in length with a topic sentence and supporting details. 2. The student will support her writing with details from materials read, or life experiences. 3. Given word bank, or vocabulary words, the student will edit her work for strong and specific word choices that add description to her supporting details.
Student's instructional level	<p>CMT grade 8 above goal in math with a reader as modification. Took out of level 6 CMT and was below goal in reading and writing. Student A is currently reading at the 8th grade level.</p> <p>First semester English grade: A-</p>	<p>Spring 2003 Triennial testing results WCJIII Broad Reading SS: 87 (low average) Broad Written Language SS: 89 (low average) Broad Math SS: 64 (intellectually deficient) Total Achievement SS: 76 (borderline) First semester English grade: B-</p>
Preferred learning styles	<p>Logical : Student learns in an orderly manner, using reasoning skills and benefits from tasks being broken down into sequential steps.</p> <p>Visual/ auditory learning style: benefits from visualization, models, notes, cue words, mnemonics, repeating information orally, written and oral directions.</p>	<p>Concrete and Visual learner: benefits from concrete examples, models, personalized examples, experiential education, visualization, study cards, graphic organizers, hands on activities, tasks broken down into steps, information presented visually in illustrations, notes, or lists, and mnemonics.</p>

Task A.4 Student A

Student A is a fifteen-year-old ninth grade student who has been in my English 9-10(200) class since August. . He has been identified as having a specific learning disability. In addition to my knowledge of Student A's strengths and weaknesses, I consulted with Student A's school psychologist representative, his reading strategies teacher, the school's reading specialist, and team teacher (both from the English Department), and used his IEP when gathering information and developing my learning segment.

According to his academic history, Student A has consistently read two grades below current grade level throughout his school career. His difficulty in decoding manifests itself in poor reading fluency and inaccuracy in word identification, therefore affecting his reading comprehension. He took out of level grade 6 CMT and was below goal in reading and writing.

Written Expression is another weak area for Student A. He has tremendous difficulty in spelling and organizing his thoughts in writing, both in content and in basic sentence structure. Consequently, his IEP language arts goal focuses on written expression and individual objectives focus on organizing his writing, generating a thesis statement, and editing in the areas of spelling and word choice. During a recent parent conference, his mother cited writing as historically his most challenging area.

Student A has made excellent progress in English this year. He currently has an A- average for marking period three. He received an A- for the first semester of the class as well. His decoding ability has improved; however, writing remains his weakest area. Earlier in the year he had trouble organizing an outline and writing an essay. Because other students were also we worked extensively on writing one-paragraph essays in response to literature. Student A continually showed improvement, and eventually was able to write excellent one paragraph essays on tests. Beginning with marking period three, he and the rest of the class, are ready to resume three to five paragraph essays.

Student A is an auditory and visual learner, and a logical learner. He learns in an orderly manner and does well on tasks in which he is able to apply reasoning skills. In the area of Language Arts, he benefits from tasks being broken down into a step by step sequence. He benefits from visualizing plot sequences in literature, demonstrations, information presented in notes, drawings, or models, oral and written directions, cue words, reading aloud, and mnemonics. Graphic organizers are of particular importance.

Student A has many strengths. Overall, it is evident that he is highly motivated. He has a pleasant disposition and a supportive family. In the classroom, his reading disability markedly

affects his ability to read text independently and to read questions on tests. However, his ability to learn reading and writing strategies, and then apply them is a great strength of his which cannot be underestimated. Student A's willingness to work hard to continually improve his skills has enabled him to compensate for his learning disabilities. I plan to recommend him for a 300 level Special Education course for 10th grade and a Regular education English course his junior year. Because of this, I frequently consult with my team teacher to ensure that the skills taught in my class are consistent with those taught in 9th and 10th grade regular education English courses.

The school psychologist has also been helpful in determining modifications for Student A. For instance, all reading is done in class. Students and teachers take turns so as to maintain fluency levels and structure the reading to encourage the application of reading strategies and discussion. Student A also has the option to have tests and quizzes read to him in an alternate setting. I usually discuss his options with him privately ahead of time to encourage Student A to independently access his resources as needed. Student A's maturity and independence in doing this will be an important strength for him as he pursues his educational goals in the future.

There are several accommodations made for Student A's written work. He is always assigned a pre-writing strategy to assist him in organizing the content and structure of his essays. He also benefits from using an editing checklist that focuses on specific revision skills. I do not penalize Student A for spelling during spontaneous writing. When editing his work, I have him circle words he thinks are spelled incorrectly and then use an electronic dictionary to correct them. I then cue further spelling corrections and encourage him to apply his knowledge of common spelling patterns to correct the word. During in-class writing assignments, Student A frequently uses the classroom computer to do his writing. There are no behavior modifications for Student A.

Task A.4 Student B

Student B has been identified as having a speech and language impairment. She is a tenth grade student who is currently in my English 9-10 (200) class for a second year. In addition to my knowledge of her abilities, I gathered information about her past academic history from her school psychologist representative, and a speech pathologist that has worked with Student B since middle school. I found that her disability affects her in her ability to express herself orally and in writing. She has great difficulty with vocabulary, sentence structure, making accurate and specific word choices, and in putting ideas into her own words. Her reading comprehension is affected by her difficulty with vocabulary, and memorizing plot sequence and characters. She also has trouble generalizing skills from one task to another.

This information was consistent with a triennial assessment conducted this year. Testing results showed that compared to students her own age, Student B is significantly lower in her working memory and cognitive processing abilities. She has difficulty retrieving words and information, which makes it difficult for her to synthesize information, apply it, or to know how to ask questions to clarify concepts for herself.

Student B's academic performance and progress are due to her excellent study habits, the consistent effort that she puts into her work, and her motivation to learn. She received a grade of B- for the first semester and currently has an average of B for marking period three. She is a conscientious student who always does her assignments. This is a great strength for her and helps her reinforce skills and information learned in class each day. Test scores are often low and do not accurately reflect her comprehension or knowledge because of her difficulty with understanding test questions and directions. Student B generally does better on written assignments and projects.

My classroom observations and assessments over the past year and a half, in conjunction with consultation with the above mentioned school personnel, helped me develop the goal for my learning segment. I also used information garnered from her IEP and her Language Arts goal and objectives. Information gathered from these sources concurs that Student B decodes well, but needs strategies that help her interpret what she reads. One of Student B's strengths is her ability to highlight important details and to summarize what she reads. However, she needs to compliment her reading with activities that go beyond plot summaries and that encourage her to develop her critical thinking skills. She also needs strategies to help her retain information and store it in long term memory.

Student B is able to organize her writing, but has great difficulty with sentence structure, word choice, and elaboration. She is able to write multi-paragraph essays, but has trouble with wording topic sentences correctly. She has had limited experience in writing a thesis statement and has had great difficulty doing so. She also has trouble making connections with the text in her writing. Over the past year she has made improvements in using compound and complex sentences.

Student B is a concrete learner who has a visual and kinesthetic learning style. It is important for her to have models and visual diagrams. Models of appropriate use of vocabulary, topic sentence or thesis statement writing, and paragraph formation are also important, as well as visualization, cue words and study cards. Hands-on activities aid comprehension and in the transferring of skills. Mnemonics are excellent strategies for Student B as they help her with long term memory skills.

Classroom modifications and strategies for Student B include pre-teaching and re-teaching vocabulary and concepts. Her work should be checked in progress, test questions and directions rephrased, and she should be asked to restate information. Questioning strategies should check for reading comprehension, encourage her to apply critical thinking skills, make connections, and elaborate on her thoughts. It is also important for her to orally express her thoughts and have them rephrased back to her, so that she can hear what she says. This reinforces her thinking and helps her to correct herself, develop her ideas, or adjust her word choices. Personalized examples are also important. It improves her understanding of what she reads and helps with her memory skills. For written expression, Student B benefits from models and pre-writing strategies, and editing strategies for sentencing and accurate and specific word choices. There are no behavioral modifications in place for student B.

Task B.1 Planning Commentary

The overall learning goal of this unit is to have students A and B improve critical thinking skills by making connections between Greek Mythology and the world today. Students A and B will be asked to apply reading strategies, as well as their prior knowledge about Greek Mythology when reading the myth “Prometheus and Pandora” (Students participated in an introductory lesson on Greek Mythology, and read another myth prior to beginning this unit). The students will then be asked to make connections between the myth, and other materials read, or their life experiences. A four-paragraph essay assignment will serve as a summative assessment that evaluates the connections that students were able to make between the myth and the world today, and their ability to communicate them in written expression.

When developing the learning segment, I had to consider the unique learning needs of Student A and B, as well as their skill level and prior knowledge. To gather information and develop activities, I utilized Student A and B’s school psychologist representative, the reading specialist, Student A’s reading strategies teacher, Student B’s speech pathologist, as well as my BEST Mentor and team teacher (both of whom are in the English department).

Based upon my prior knowledge of Student A, and consult with his reading strategies teacher, I decided the myth should be read orally in class, alternating between students and teacher. I also consulted with the reading specialist who suggested that I have students read a page, stop and underline important details, and then annotate (write a one or two sentence summary) at the bottom of each page. This will help give Student A practice in identifying significant details to the story and help improve his reading comprehension.

The annotating will also coincide with recommendations made by Student B’s speech pathologist. She advised that I continually pre-teach, re-teach and review throughout the unit. By using this strategy, Student B will read the text once, go back and skim to underline, and then synthesize the information to write a summary. This gives her three opportunities to process the information and help her store it in long term memory. The annotations will also give her a summary of each page to refer back to if needed. Since locating important details is a strength for her, she can model her annotations for other students, encouraging class participation and involvement, which is so important to her processing information. She will also benefit from hearing other students model their answers.

The reading specialist also suggested a post-reading discussion activity to help Student A visually organize his ideas, and to give him the opportunity to develop his thoughts orally. Making connections will be a strength for him, and an important precursor to translating his ideas

into written expression, a weaker area. For student B, a discussion activity is pivotal in allowing her to develop her ideas, share them with the class, and listen to other student responses as models for correct wording and vocabulary. Considering student needs, I modified a 4-box Question Answer Relationship activity for the lesson that will encourage students to organize their thoughts about three important themes presented in the myth.

Both students are proficient in paragraph writing and structure, and have limited experience in using transition words, but they struggle in different ways with essay writing. Student A has difficulty organizing his writing. Therefore it is imperative to devise a pre-writing strategy that breaks the essay down into sequential steps. A pre-writing strategy will also be important for student B to reinforce the connections she has made with the text and help her write it down in an organized manner to refer back to as she writes. It will also provide a time and place for her to focus on writing drafts for the thesis statement and topic sentences. This may also be an important time to provide student B with models and examples as needed.

I created an editing checklist for the assignment because revision is such an important step in the writing process for both students, but in different ways. It will be especially important for Student A because he will need to use revision time to correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Revising will also be important for Student B in the areas of awkward wording and grammar. In addition, I felt that both students would benefit from a visual list of appropriate writing standards that they could refer to as they completed their essays. I chose to color code the different stages of the writing process, so resources and activities could be easily identified and organized.

When developing the unit, I also sought to parallel the mainstream curriculum for skill development and learning expectations. I consulted with my BEST mentor in the English department as to appropriate learning goals for a mythology unit. He suggested having an activity that has the students connect the myths with contemporary issues. I also asked my Team Teacher for English 10 to approve my pre-writing activity and essay requirements to make sure they were consistent and appropriate to the English Department's expectations and standards.

For the most part, this is an exceptionally well-behaved class. It will be important to keep them involved in the story and activities, as some students have difficulty staying on task and can easily be distracted. Maintaining an engaging pace that is not too fast will also be important, as well as redirecting students and queuing expected behavior. However, based upon previous daily experience, this will be a minor problem.

Task B.2 Lesson Log Day 1 2/3/03

46 minutes

Lesson Objective: Students will improve reading comprehension by applying reading strategies such as making predictions, underlining important details, summarizing parts of text (annotating), and making connections with the text during class discussions.

Materials needed: photocopied copies of the myth “Prometheus and Pandora”, copies of journal assignment.

Instructional strategies and learning activities:

1. In order to activate prior knowledge I questioned students about their knowledge of myths and asked if there is anything we can learn from them. They have had introductory lessons on Greek Mythology and have previously read one myth about Zeus.
2. I read the introduction to the myth, discussed it, and had students make predictions.
3. I wrote the reading strategy directions on the board and reviewed them. They were to circle words they don't know, underline important details, and annotate at the bottom of each page.
4. I read pages 41-45. I wrote main character names on the board, as they were introduced and had students practice pronouncing them. I queried students to check comprehension and clarify important details.
5. Homework: write a journal entry from Prometheus' point of view and explain why you want to bring fire to earth.

Students had several opportunities to communicate their thinking during the lesson. Students shared their thoughts during the pre-reading discussion, when making predictions, sharing their underlined details and annotations, and in their journal assignment. As an accommodation for Student A, students and teacher read the myth orally in class. This allowed him to build fluency and apply reading strategies.

Frequent comprehension checks and rephrasing questions, as needed, were important modifications made for Student B. Hearing the same question reworded sometimes helps her understand what is being asked; at other times she needs the question broken down or clarified.

Equally important, it builds in processing time for her to gather her thoughts. I also rephrased her answers so she can hear her thoughts and clarify, elaborate, or change her answer

I monitored student learning and gave feedback when I questioned students to check comprehension. When students gave wrong answers, I asked them to support that answer with a quote from the text, which they couldn't do. They could then correct themselves. I also gave leading questions to encourage them to reflect on the polar positions of Zeus and Prometheus concerning fire, and then to make a connection with contemporary society. Student A said "But everything Zeus said has come true. We have airplanes, money and we make weapons and we're still not responsible". Students were also asked to read their annotations. If their summaries were off, they were asked to read what they underlined. I alternated between doing this to encourage students to correct their annotations and having some students model their answers for others. Students will also get feedback on their homework.

Student A was able to meet the lesson objectives. He made logical predictions and cited examples of how fire would make life easier for people on earth. He also underlined important details and annotated his text. He does better annotating than he does underlining. This is most likely due to the fact that he writes his summaries from information kept in his working memory. Going back to skim the text and underline is a more difficult task for him. Tomorrow, I would like him to share what he has underlined and see if he can work on that skill. I would also like to make sure he has enough time to go back and reread to underline.

Student B was also able to meet the lesson objective. She made logical predictions and underlining and annotating are skills she does well. I am going to continue to call on her to model her annotations for other students, as this builds her confidence and encourages her to participate more. Student B did, however, have difficulty making connections. Tomorrow I would like to give her more concrete examples, have other students model their connections for her, and have her develop her own personalized examples that she can relate to.

Prometheus and Pandora Journal Assignment

Name: _____ Date: _____

Write a journal entry from Prometheus' point of view. Explain why you want to give fire to the people on earth.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears slightly aged or off-white. There is no handwriting or other markings on the page.

2 students absent *

Lesson Objective: Students will improve reading comprehension by applying reading strategies such as making predictions, underlining important details, summarizing parts of text (annotating), making connections with the text during class discussions, and by responding to a quote from the text in writing.

Materials needed: Student copies of the myth “Prometheus and Pandora” and copies of the journal assignment.

Instructional strategies and learning activities:

1. I activated students’ prior knowledge by writing the characters on the board and reviewing their significance to the story. Student volunteers shared their journal entries. We also discussed who is right, Zeus or Prometheus? Then the students made predictions about what they think will happen next. I reviewed the steps for underlining and annotating, and wrote them on the board.
2. We read pages 46-48 and I questioned students to check comprehension and clarify important details. I also had them share their annotations and underlined details.
3. Homework is a journal entry that asks them to respond to the following quote: “For from that day to this, hope has been man’s best friend in a world full of trouble” (pg.48).

Students were able to communicate their thinking during the pre-reading discussion, during comprehension checks and discussions during the reading, when they shared their annotation, and in their homework assignment. In day two’s homework assignment students will share their interpretations concerning the importance of hope in the world.

Accommodations were made for Student A when we read the story orally. Modifications were made for Student B through frequent comprehension checks, modeling, and concrete examples. I also gave her additional support when making inferences. For example, I knew she would have trouble understanding what it meant when Zeus made a “sly” smile, which was important to understanding the story. Through questioning she was able to develop a personalized example (her brothers when they are about to tickle her). She was then able to apply it to understanding that Zeus had a plan in mind to punish Epimetheus.

I monitored students’ learning and gave them feedback in the beginning of the lesson when they were asked to retell the significance of the main characters. Students were also asked

questions to check understanding, clarify events, and make inferences during the reading and post reading discussions. I also asked students to share their underlining and annotations, and as a class, we came up with a good model for certain pages. Students were given individual feedback while they were working and I was able to check their work. Students were given oral feedback on their homework from Monday night when they read it to the class, and written feedback when they handed it in.

Student A was able to meet the lesson objective by completing each task successfully. At first he underlined minor details and included too much information in his annotations, but I asked him to read his annotation and identify any information he could cut out. I also asked students to critique his and other students' annotations when they read them aloud. This is a strategy I am going to modify in the future. It was better to have students share their annotations and then summarize for them myself exactly which details they should have included. This way they can correct their own and not feel that their peers are criticizing them.

Student A did an excellent job answering comprehension questions. He works very hard. I think I have to give him more positive feedback so that he can see his own progress. His journal from day one shows he that he understood what Prometheus wants to do, but he fails to mention the big picture: Prometheus wants to make their life easier. He needs to work on getting the main idea, and then supporting it with details.

Student B also met the lesson goal by completing each task successfully. She did an excellent job retelling and demonstrated that she understood the plot when questioned. She also did well when I encouraged her to make personal connections with the text. I think having concrete examples helps her comprehension. I want to continue to encourage her to make more personal connections, especially with vocabulary. Her ability to underline important details and annotate continues to be a significant strength for her. The annotations will be an important resource for her and can help her compensate for any memory deficits.

* During this class there was a student who had his head down for about two thirds of the class. He came into the class upset as occasionally happens. Given time and space, he comes back to the group as he did at the end of class when he joined the discussion. I went over to speak to him periodically throughout the class, to encourage him to rejoin the group. I then followed up with the student and school social worker after class in accordance to the student's behavior plan

Prometheus and Pandora
Journal Assignment

Name: _____ Date: _____

Write a one-page response to the following quote:

“For from that day to this, hope has been Man’s best friend in a world full of troubles”
(pg. 48).

1. Explain what Epimetheus means when he says this.
2. Is hope still important today? Give a specific example from your own life, or something you have read or heard about.

Lesson Objective: Given cues, students will improve reading comprehension by brainstorming important themes found in the myth “Prometheus and Pandora” and connecting them with their own knowledge and experience.

Materials: student copies of myth, 4 boxes homework activity

Instructional Strategies and activities:

1. Students were asked to share and discuss homework.
2. I wrote, “How do myths relate to life today?” on the board and we discussed the different possibilities. I discussed the fact that old stories often have morals, or important lessons to teach us and asked them to brainstorm any possible lessons they might have learned from “Prometheus and Pandora”. I also explained why it is important to make personal connections with what we read. It helps us use what we already know, helps us understand characters, and understand what important message(s) the author is trying to get across. It also helps us remember the story and make it more meaningful. It may also improve our understanding of the world and ourselves.
3. I used questioning strategies to activate prior knowledge, prompt, clarify, and lead and facilitate student discourse. Ideas for themes were written on the board.
4. The discussion and brainstorming generated three major themes: (1) It’s important to stand up for what you believe in, even if you may be punished for it. (2) Weapons and power must be handled responsibly. (3) Hope is important in the world. Other inappropriate themes were discussed and eliminated from the board by the students.
5. A four box homework activity was distributed to the class. I read over it and encouraged students to consider what we covered in today’s lesson.

Students had opportunities to communicate their thinking when they shared their homework from the previous night. They also demonstrated their comprehension when they brainstormed major themes in the myth and gave examples of how those themes relate to life today, and during the completion of the 4-box activity for homework.

I modified the lesson for Student A by breaking the questions down in the 4-box activity, since he is a logical learner and benefits from tasks being broken down into steps. I modified the lesson for Student B by asking clarifying questions to help her develop her thoughts. I also

rephrased and repeated her answers back to her so that I could model grammatically correct answers and/or more specific word choices.

I monitored students understanding by asking probing questions during the brainstorming activity and discussion, writing their answers on the board, and asking them to clarify and elaborate on their ideas. I also checked their understanding by continually asking them to compare their ideas for themes with the myth to see if it was a major idea presented in the story. I further monitored comprehension by asking them to complete the 4 box activity for homework. This would be their first practice transferring their thoughts into written expression.

Student B met the lesson objective but had some trouble generating ideas for possible themes. However, given leading questions, she was able to offer some ideas. Once themes were written on the board, she did an excellent job brainstorming ideas of how the themes related to other events in history and life today. Given questioning strategies and other student examples, she gave an example from *The Diary of Anne Frank*, specifically when the Frank family took the risk of taking in another Jewish family in order to save them. She also gave a wonderful personal example of how hope is helping a family member who is terminally ill. This was an excellent example of her modeling for the rest of the class. I am really seeing her confidence building and her participation increasing. Today's lesson covered a lot of material and I feel that Student B will need an additional activity to reinforce the skills and information learned. I feel that it would benefit her to do a concrete and hands on activity to help her organize and develop her thoughts to assist her in transferring skills before writing the essay.

Student A did very well in meeting the lesson objective. He offered some ideas for possible themes, and he did an excellent job giving examples that connected the theme with life today. He independently made connections between Prometheus and what he had learned in another class about Black History month. He also made a connection between the myth and another piece of literature, the book *Number the Stars*. The class was a very productive session in generating thoughts and ideas, and the homework will help assist him in developing those ideas, but I think student A needs more support in helping him organize his thinking before he begins the challenging task of writing an essay. I think he needs an opportunity to further develop his own thinking and to hear the thoughts of others.

I met with the Reading Specialist after school and decided to change my lesson plans to build in one more day of a thinking and sharing activity. She suggested the carousel brainstorm activity, which I modified for day four. It will give me an opportunity to re-teach the same concepts and participate in a hands-on activity that will help them organize and develop their ideas.

Prometheus and Pandora

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. *Prometheus and Pandora* tells of someone who was brave enough to do what he thought was right, even though he knew that he would be punished. Why is this important in the world today? Can you give an example of somebody you know, or have read about, that did this?

3. Why did Zeus include hope in a box full of troubles? Do you think hope is important today?

2. Zeus thought that fire was too dangerous for people to have. Would you have agreed? What do people have today that is even more dangerous?

4. Which message is the most meaningful to you? Explain why.

Task B.2 Lesson Log Day 4 2/6/03 46 minutes

2 students absent

Lesson Objectives:

1. Students will improve reading comprehension by supporting themes from the myth “Prometheus and Pandora” with evidence from the text.
2. Students will relate these lessons to today by supporting them with examples from materials read, or their life experiences.

Materials needed: student copies of “Prometheus and Pandora”, 4 box activity, large pieces of paper, and markers.

Instructional Strategies and Activities:

1. I wrote “How do myths relate to life today?” on the board and activated prior knowledge by reviewing homework, and their answers from the 4 box activity.
2. I attached three large pieces of paper to the board, each with one of the three main ideas identified on day three. On each piece there is a space to write supporting details from the text and a space to write supporting examples from their own experience.
3. I read each of the themes and discussed them. Using their homework and ideas from the discussion, I had students take turns coming to the board and filling in their ideas in the appropriate places. All students had a turn.
4. I facilitated the discussion and continually encouraged students to make connections, and see the significance and purpose of their ideas.

Students participated in a hands-on activity that would help them make connections between the text and the world today. All students had an equal opportunity to participate. Students were able to communicate their thinking during the pre-activity discussion, when writing on the posted paper, and during the post activity discussion.

The lesson was modified for student A because it broke the question, “How do myths relate to life today?” down into steps, and it visually organized the information for him. The activity was similar to an over-sized graphic organizer that separated each theme so that he could visually make the connections. The lesson was modified for student B because it gave her a hands-on activity to reinforce the concepts and memory skills. Because the activity generated constant discussion, she was given a chance to develop her own thoughts, share them with the

class, and hear what other students had to say. I also rephrased her thoughts back to her so she could hear them, correct her grammar as needed, and clarify her word choices.

I monitored student learning by constant oral questioning and assessment of their written answers. When their evidence from the text was not specific enough they were directed to look back at the text for specific examples or quotes. They were also cued to elaborate on their thoughts, make personal connections with the text, and to make their contemporary examples more specific.

Both Student A and B met the lesson objective. They were able to provide supporting examples from the text and to life today both orally and in writing. The re-teaching and review of yesterday's concepts served as an important visual and cognitive reinforcement for Student A. It organized the information for him, and helped prepare him for developing his pre-writing strategy. He made important contributions to the written activity and the class discussion. The large pieces of paper from today will be posted each day, so that he can refer back to it as needed when developing his outline. For future consideration, the pre-writing activity will have to be taught step by step to Student A to help him organize his thoughts as he compiles his essay.

The re-teaching and hands-on activity was also very important for Student B. It built her confidence because she was able to make important contributions to the written activity and oral discussion. It also helped her refine her word choices and correct her syntax before even starting to write. Teacher questioning helped her clarify her thoughts. The pre-writing task may still be very difficult for Student B tomorrow. I plan on having her restate directions and provide models or framed sentences as needed.

The carousel-brainstorming activity went well, but there are things that I will do differently next time. Student A was very self-conscious about what he wrote and doing it correctly. I would like to try having the students work in three teams, and have one student from each team go up at the same time, each to a different theme. This will quicken the pace and increase the student involvement in the brainstorm, as well as make students less inhibited about their writing.

Task B.2 Lesson Log Day 5 2/10/03 30 minutes

Shortened period – early dismissal due to inclement weather (snow day 2/7/03)

1 student absent

Lesson Objective: Students will be introduced to writing a thesis statement, and will draft a statement of their own.

Materials needed: thesis statement handout, markers, and student brainstorms from day 4.

Instructional Strategies and activities:

1. I put student brainstorming from day 4 on the board and reviewed them with the class.
2. I explained that we will be writing a four paragraph essay, and wrote the following prompt on the board, “After reading the myth “Prometheus and Pandora”, discuss how Greek myths relate to life today.”
3. I distributed and went over the handout on writing a thesis statement.
4. Students drafted a thesis statement of their own.
5. I initially intended to put student samples on the board, but due to the shortened period I closed with having several students read theirs orally.

Students had an opportunity to communicate their thinking during the review at the beginning of the period, when asked to share what they knew about a thesis, and when they were writing their drafts. Some students shared their drafts, while others asked questions.

During the lesson I realized the prompt was confusing, especially for student B. I tried to simplify it for her and the entire class, and changed it to: “How does “Prometheus and Pandora” relate to life today?” I made modifications for Student B by checking her work in progress, and having her orally try to tell me her thesis statement. Because she was experiencing great difficulty, I made an accommodation for Student B by providing her with a model of an appropriate thesis that she could adapt for her essay. I modified the lesson for Student A by reading his draft back to him, so he could hear the fluency and decide for himself if it sounded right.

I monitored student learning by asking them to restate the definition of a thesis statement. I also gave them examples of what not to do when writing a thesis, and I asked them to give some similar examples of what not to write. I also had students draft their own thesis statement and read them out loud so that I could correct their accuracy and grammar. The students could therefore learn from the examples of the other members of the class.

Student A did well writing his thesis draft. He wrote a couple of drafts and then decided to use the prompt as a foundation for his statement. He chose the theme of standing up for what you believe in. His draft was conceptually on target, and just needed some revising. He is making excellent progress in writing a thesis independently. This specifically addresses one of his IEP objectives.

Student B, however, had great difficulty in drafting a thesis statement. It was very difficult for her to express her understanding in words. Eventually I wrote a model on the board that she could adapt for her myth. The model basically showed her how she can change the writing prompt into a thesis statement, a strategy she can apply in the future. Writing a thesis was a difficult task for many students in the class. Thesis writing is something that can be the focus of many different types of writing assignments, and will be specifically revisited in several weeks when the class will write a persuasive essay.

For tomorrow's lesson, I plan on using the simplified prompt and going over the pre-writing strategy. For Student A, it will be important to give him the overall picture of the essay and then break it down into sequential steps. It will be important to check Student B's work in progress and talk her through awkward phrasing.

Task B.2 Lesson Log Day 6 2/11/03 46 minutes

Summative Assessment administered as part of this lesson

Lesson Objective: Students will improve written expression skills by completing a pre-writing strategy for a four-paragraph essay.

- The four-paragraph essay serves as a **summative assessment** for this unit. The intent is to assess student learning during this unit and their ability to make connections between literature and their own knowledge and experience. For this lesson, students made connections between the myth and modern day and organized their thoughts and ideas into essay form with a thesis and paragraphs containing topic sentences, supporting details and examples.

Materials Needed: Overhead projector, markers, pre-writing strategy and overhead copy of prewriting strategy.

Instructional Strategies and activities:

1. I posted student brainstorms from day 4 on board and handed out the pink prewriting strategy with revised prompt.
2. I went through the outline on the overhead and gave strategies and guidelines for each section of the outline. Students used an orange transition sheet (see attached), which they are familiar with from past assignments.
3. I had students work on the pre-writing strategy. The paraprofessional and myself helped students one on one, and redirected and refocused as necessary.
4. Homework: write rough drafts.

Students were able to communicate their thinking and knowledge of writing essays, and ask questions when we went over the pre-writing strategy. Students were also able to ask questions and demonstrate their knowledge when I met with them one-on-one while writing their pre-writing strategy.

Modifications made for Student A included no spelling penalty, no handwriting penalty, and cued spelling corrections. I also read the pre-writing strategy to him. Modifications for Student B included oral rephrasing of directions for each section of the prewriting strategy. She was asked to restate information and to orally tell topic sentences before writing.

I monitored student learning by checking their work in progress and asking them to clarify their thoughts and ideas orally before writing, or as they revised their work. This was especially important for Student B. I asked her to redo her second paragraph in the pre-writing strategy, because she did not understand that the three supporting details had to explain her topic sentence about the myth, and that it was in paragraph three that she would connect the myth with examples from today's world. When students had trouble with their topic sentences, I asked them to read what they had written out loud and then tell me if they thought the point they were making was clear. If their writing was confusing or incorrect, I questioned them to see their own errors and make changes as necessary. If students misunderstood a section, I was able to rephrase the directions and check their understanding before they made corrections.

Student A did an excellent job drafting his topic sentences and supporting details. He is taking risks with vocabulary and is clearly interested in developing his own writing style. This demonstrated to me that he grasped the organizing concepts behind the pre-writing strategy and is comfortable enough with them to take risks. I asked him after class if he found the outline to be helpful and he said, "Yes it helps me organize what I want to say. I also like it better when we connect what we do with 'now'. It means more to me." This showed me that he understands the overall goal of the unit and the strategies that he can access to help him accomplish it. I would like to focus on his spelling and have him circle words he thinks might be misspelled tomorrow. I would also like him to read his work out loud to check clarity and understanding.

Through my one on one discussion with her and the questions she asked, Student B demonstrated that she understood the writing prompt and what was expected of her in the essay. She has so far done an excellent job in making connections between the myth and today, and was able to quickly come up with supporting details and examples for her body paragraphs. Spelling is also a strong area for her. Her most challenging task was writing topic sentences for her body paragraphs. Going over possible topic sentences orally, before writing, allowed her to change awkward wording and to be more specific. It also helped ease her frustration. I will have her read her work out loud and check her word choices for accuracy tomorrow. I would also like to read her draft to her, line by line, so that she can hear what it sounds like and make corrections on her own.

Lesson Objective: Students will improve writing skills by editing their work for organization, standard usage and grammar, spelling, capitalization, placement of transition words, and appropriate word choice. As a result of this lesson, students will learn skills in revising and reinforce their understanding of the organization of an essay and correct writing standards.

Materials Needed: Editing checklist, transition sheet

Instructional Strategies and activities:

1. I explained to the students that they will be editing and revising their rough drafts today, before going to the computer lab tomorrow to type their final drafts.
2. I gave out the editing checklist and pointed out that it was copied on green paper, to help them keep it organized and with their rough drafts in their English binders.
3. I review the backside of the checklist with the heading “Helpful Hints for Better Writing”. I asked students to give examples, restate, or ask questions about each item on the checklist. I explained that some items are for formatting for their typed draft tomorrow.
4. I had students get out their orange transition sheets that they use when writing and went over appropriate placement of transitions (they have been using this sheet throughout the year for one paragraph essays).
5. Students worked on editing their drafts and completing their checklist.
6. The paraprofessional and I worked with students individually and redirected them to stay on task as needed.
7. I collected drafts at the end of class and closed by reviewing what we learned today and the expectations for tomorrow.

Students were able to communicate their thinking during the explanation of the checklist, during the revision of their drafts, and when I worked with them individually. I made accommodations for Student B by having her restate some of the items on the editing checklist in her own words, and gave her extra processing time when doing so. I had her read her essay out loud for me and identify awkward wording. For Student A, I made modifications for spelling and had him go through his essay once to circle misspelled words, and then we went through it together to identify additional spelling errors and review common letter/sound patterns. I also had him read his essay out loud to me to see if it sounded clear and well organized.

I monitored student learning by asking them to give examples for items on the checklist, or to point out other assignments where we have had similar writing expectations. I also monitored their learning when I checked their revision process. I gave them feedback orally, by asking them to clarify certain passages in their writing, avoid repetitions, or make different choices when using transition words. Sometimes I wrote comments on their drafts when working with them. Also after collecting the drafts, I wrote additional comments and corrections that they can edit for tomorrow.

Student A made satisfactory progress in revising his draft. He worked very hard at making corrections. He also made an excellent effort in attempting to vary repetitive phrases and incorporate stronger word choices. There was a lot for him to work on, but he is persistent and his editing skills are improving. He is also becoming more proficient in his use of transition words.

Student B also made progress towards achieving the lesson objective. Once she puts her sentences down on paper, she usually does well putting everything together. When she read her draft to me, she was able to make minor changes. However, it is difficult for her to incorporate transition words into her writing. She has a hard time using them, which makes sense because they require a certain amount of ability to manipulate sentences and rephrase ideas, and an understanding of fluency in writing, all areas of difficulty for her. I would like to continue to work on transitions with her at a slower pace. Up to this point, we have used the orange sheet when writing their concluding sentences.

There are several changes I would like to take into future consideration. First, both students should have been asked to write their rough drafts on every other line. Secondly, based upon Student A and B's learning needs, there are things I will change for the editing checklist in the future. Since Student A is a logical learner, an editing checklist that was more step by step would be more helpful. Items for the rough draft should also be on a separate sheet from items for a typed draft. Student B would also benefit from a simplified version of the checklist that is less wordy, and with clear and simple directions. I will revise the checklist for future use, but I don't want to confuse them by giving them another checklist for tomorrow, adding one more additional piece of paper.

Task B.2 Lesson Log Day 8 2/13/03 46 minutes

The summative assessment was administered as part of this lesson.

Lesson Objectives:

1. Students will type, format, and use a word processing program to edit their final drafts for spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar.
2. Students will evaluate their work using a grading rubric and determine their own strengths and weaknesses.

Materials Needed: Student rubrics, computers

Instructional Strategies and activities:

8. The class met in one of the school computer labs to type their work. Their rough drafts, with teacher feedback, were distributed and they were asked to get out their green sheets.
9. Before students logged on, we went over the green sheet, and expectations for the correct format of their paper. I also went over each item on the student rubrics, so that they understood how they would be graded.
10. Students were asked to type their final draft, check spelling, grammar, capitalization and punctuation. They were then told to use the student rubric to revise their final draft, and evaluate their work.
11. The paraprofessional and myself assisted students as needed.
12. When students were finished, they were asked to hand in their final drafts with their rough drafts and green sheets stapled underneath. I closed by commending them for their hard work and accomplishment and reminded them that this assignment will become part of their writing portfolio.

Students were able to communicate their thinking by asking questions during the pre-typing discussion and throughout the lesson. They were also able to communicate their thinking on the student rubrics during their self-assessment.

Student A is a fast typist, as he is being encouraged by his teachers and parents to do more and more of his written work on the computer. Because he finished typing early, I modified the lesson for him by spending a lot of time with him going over his document and looking for spelling errors that spell check did not pick up. Homonyms are especially problematic for Student A. I pointed out some of these words for him, so that he could see his mistakes and look out for these words in the future. We also worked on sentence structure and transitions.

I made modifications for Student B by checking her work in progress and having her read her final copy out loud. I also modified my expectations for her use of transitions, because she was finding incorporating them into her writing exceedingly difficult. She has come so far in the organization of her paragraphs and her sentence structure, but is not quite to the level where she can manipulate and adjust her sentences enough to build in transition words or sentences without reworking her paragraphs and becoming overwhelmed. She needs to spend more time on this particular skill. Models for placement of transition words and sentences would be helpful.

I monitored student learning by observing their progress during the class. I gave them feedback as they worked, reminding them to do their headings, indent paragraphs, and complete their self-assessments. I read certain paragraphs aloud for students as they typed, so they could hear run-on or off topic sentences, or if their choice or use of transition was incorrect. I also monitored student learning by having them complete their self-evaluations and critique their own strengths and weaknesses.

Both Students A and B did very well in meeting the lesson objectives. Student A is becoming more proficient in word processing. He completed his self-assessment satisfactorily, recognizing that his conclusion needed further development. He did not, however, cite writing standards as an area that needs more work. Perhaps he considers working on his spelling as a given. After pointing this out to him, I would like to give him positive feedback in his editing efforts because he has made such excellent progress, and focus on strategies for him to continue to improve. For example, I noticed a pattern in his misspellings (i.e. vary/very, may/my) of words that spell check will not pick up. I think it would be a good idea of him to maintain a list of problem words and have a customized editing checklist.

Student B also met the lesson objectives, but there is some room for improvement. She is also becoming more proficient in using the computer and formatting her essays. She tends to type her draft, hit spell check, announce she finished, and try to hand it in. She needs to be reminded to look it over and make sure it sounds right. I think she was also hasty with her self-assessment. She gave herself full points for transitions and checked off transition as completed on her editing checklist. More importantly, however, she did note that transitions are an area that she needs to work on. As mentioned previously, I also think the language on the editing checklist was too cluttered for her and affected her understanding of it. I think it is difficult for her to

apply critical thinking skills when critiquing her own work and sometimes monitoring her own understanding of written directions.

Task C.2 Commentary on Videotaped Instruction

Video Segment 2: lesson log 2, demonstrates modifications made for students A and B. It is reversed because of the sequence in taping of the lessons. **Student A:** boy in green shirt and baseball hat, second row **Student B:** girl in green shirt, dark hair, first row to my left.

I modified the lesson for Student B when I checked her understanding of what a sly smile might mean. I asked her to give me a personalized example, “What does it mean when your brothers give you a sly smile?” and then connected it to the story. At the end of the segment I ask her to read her annotation and then I rephrased it so she could hear it summarized to help her with memory retention. Tomorrow I would like to continue the strategy of rephrasing her ideas back to her. This will be especially important as we move on to discussing the themes because it will model key words and phrases for her.

I made accommodations during the lesson for Student A by reading the story aloud, to assist him in fluency and comprehension. I made modifications for him by asking him to read his annotation, I asked him to edit it for extraneous details, and then restated the three important details. I also had other students model their annotations for him. This helped him identify which details in the story were essential.

As mentioned in lesson log 2, there is a student who is upset and has his head down out of view of the camera. At one point I go over to talk to him, as does the paraprofessional at one point.

Video Segment 1: Lesson log 3, demonstrates students engaged in discourse. **Student A:** boy in second row with baseball hat. **Student B:** girl with dark curly hair in first row, closest to the window.

This segment demonstrates how I engaged students in discourse. It begins with a student coming in late, and I explain that we are brainstorming themes from “Prometheus and Pandora”. By asking students to relate the myth to life today it activated their prior knowledge and helped them apply what they already know to new information. For instance, they compared Prometheus to other people who have stood up for what they believed in (Jackie Robinson, Rosa Parks, etc.). Student A made connections between Prometheus and Martin Luther King Jr. and Student B related the importance of hope to people who suffer from cancer. By doing this, students were able to have a deeper understanding of the important messages behind the myths and why they

are still relevant today. Strategies that worked included probing questions such as “Why don’t we give guns to kids” which helped students explain why Zeus was worried about giving people fire. And clarifying questions and prompting for elaboration by frequently asking students to further explain their answers. Tomorrow I would like to pick up the pace of the discussion and redirect it more quickly if it goes off topic. I also want to do an activity that encourages equal participation from all the students and engages those that were less participatory today.

Task D.1 Summative Assessment

"Prometheus and Pandora" Essay Assignment

Name: _____ Date: _____

How does the myth "Prometheus and Pandora" relate to life today?

I. Paragraph 1 - Introduction

- A. Write a sentence that introduces your topic.

- B. Now list a couple of details that give the reader some background information about your topic.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

- C. Thesis Statement (this will be the last sentence in your paragraph):

II. Paragraph 2 - Body

- A. Write a topic Sentence that states one lesson learned from the myth.

- B. List three details from the text that will support your topic sentence.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Task D.1 Summative Assessment

III. Paragraph 3 – Body

- C. Write a topic Sentence that relates the same lesson to the world today.

- D. List three details that will support your topic sentence. You should give specific examples and explain why the lesson is important in today's world.

1.

2.

3.

III. Paragraph 4- Conclusion

- A. Write a sentence that begins with a transition and restates your thesis in different words.

- B. Write a concluding sentence for your essay.

Task D.1 Summative Assessment
Student Editing Checklist

Helpful Hints for Better Writing: Use this list as a guide to write and check your work:

Format:

- ___ Proper heading should always include the student's name, teacher's name, date, and period taught.
- ___ Indent paragraphs and double space
- ___ acceptable fonts (12 pt): Times New Roman, Bookman, and New Century Schoolbook

Standard Usage / Grammar reminders:

- ___ do not use "I"
- ___ Write in the present tense.
- ___ Do not use contractions (can't, won't, isn't)
- ___ do not use slang or catchy phrases

After Writing:

- ___ Make sure you do spell check
- ___ Use your editing checklist to edit your paper.
- ___ Check your homonyms: off/of, know/no, there/their/they're, buy/bye/by, where/were/wear/we're

Forbidden Words:

The following words are too general:

Good bad nice things sad stuff okay great weird 'till lots

Writing Wrongs:

'cuz 'cause kind of/ kinda sorta wanna gonna

Task D.1 Summative Assessment
Student Self-Evaluation

Evaluation Sheet Name: _____ Date: _____
"Prometheus and Pandora" Essay

Student Copy

Your essay will be graded on the following:

Thesis Statement: Summarizes what you want to say about the topic. 20 pts. _____

Body: Each paragraph has a topic sentence that supports your thesis.
You have included specific supporting details for each topic sentence. 20 pts. _____

Conclusion: Starts with a transition and restates your thesis 20 pts. _____

Transitions: Are used to lead into examples and supporting details. 20 pts. _____

Writing Standards Correct sentence structure, spelling, capitalization, no contractions, use of "I", or catchy phrases. 20 pts. _____
proper heading and font

Total: _____

What I did well:

What I need to work on:

Task D.1 Summative Assessment Scoring Criteria

Evaluation Rubric Name: _____ Date: _____
"Prometheus and Pandora" Essay

Teacher Copy

Your essay will be graded on the following:

Thesis Statement:	Summarizes what you want to say about the topic.	20 pts. _____
Body:	Each paragraph has a topic sentence that supports your thesis. You have included specific supporting details for each topic sentence.	20 pts. _____
Conclusion:	Starts with a transition and restates your thesis	20 pts. _____
Transitions:	Are used to lead into examples and supporting details.	20 pts. _____
Writing Standards	Correct sentence structure, spelling, capitalization, no contractions, use of "I", or catchy phrases. proper heading and font	20 pts. _____
		Total: _____
Teacher Comments:		

Task D.2 Commentary on Summative Assessment

The summative assessment for this unit was a four-paragraph essay that answers the prompt, *How does the myth “Prometheus and Pandora” relate to life today?* The summative assessment was designed to assess the students’ abilities to make connections with what they read, organize their thoughts, evaluate and develop their thinking, and ultimately express their ideas in writing. In order to do this, students must have obtained enough understanding of the characters, plot, and major themes to the extent that they are able to make accurate and logical connections. Their ability to write this essay demonstrates an improvement in critical thinking skills, therefore meeting the requirements of the portfolio learning goal.

The summative assessment was designed to accommodate the particular learning characteristics of both Students A and B. The pre-writing strategy was important for Student A, because it helped him organize his thoughts into appropriate essay format, as organization of written expression is a challenging area for him. I thought it was also important to break the task down into logical and sequenced steps. The editing checklist was also important because it gave Student A a step by step strategy for editing his essay.

The summative assessment was also designed to meet the unique learning characteristics of Student B. I changed the prompt and simplified it for her, because she found the original confusing. The pre-writing strategy broke down each paragraph so that she could focus on writing her topic sentences, an area of difficulty for her, before she began a rough draft. Through the writing of an essay, there were multiple opportunities to reteach important concepts. The essay also helped her develop her own thoughts, elaborate on them, and transfer skills into long term memory.

On day 6 students were given an editing checklist to inform them of the format, grammar and content expectations for the essay. A student copy of the grading rubric for the assignment was on the backside of the sheet. We went over this on day 8, before editing of their final drafts. Students were asked to grade themselves and identify one strength and one area that needs work.

If I were to use this summative assessment again, I would make several changes. An editing checklist that was step by step would be more helpful. Items for the rough draft should also be on a separate sheet from items for a typed draft. A simplified version of the checklist that is less wordy with clear and simple directions, would be beneficial. I would also spend more time on pre-writing with more peer revising, thesis writing, and use of transition words.

Task D.3 Final Analysis of Student Learning

Student A did very well understanding the language arts concepts focused upon in this learning segment. He underlined important details in the text, and wrote one-sentence summaries for each page. Student A's ability to make connections with the text is a tremendous strength for him. He made connections between the myth and figures from Black History month, and he connected the myth with another piece of literature, Number the Stars. He completed a pre-writing strategy and wrote a four-paragraph essay about the connections he made. This was demonstrated in his essay when he wrote: "This myth is still important to life today, such as it is important to stand up for what you believe in. Like, when Martin Luther King Jr. fought for civil rights even though he was punished. Furthermore, Harriet Tubman gained freedom, but still helped free slaves even though she could have been put back where she started, as a slave."

I plan to address Student A's strengths and weaknesses in the following ways. Student A's strength in being able to make connections with literature will be further developed in future assignments as preparation for a transition to a 300 level Special Education English course for next year, and eventually a 200 level regular education English course his junior year with modifications. We will continue to work on reading strategies and decoding. He will also have opportunities to work on his writing skills, particularly pre-writing strategies, using transition words, and proofreading, and to continue the progress he has made in expanding his vocabulary. I would like him to develop a customized editing checklist with frequently misspelled words and errors in mechanics. He should also check his work for spelling errors from the bottom-up, in an effort to check each word out of context. He will also be encouraged to use the computer for writing to help him with his editing.

The feedback that I gave to student A helped him to meet the lesson objectives. During reading and discussions he received verbal praise, suggestions for improving his reading strategies, and questioning to elicit his ideas and improve critical thinking skills. He was also encouraged to find specific supporting details from the story and to understand the necessity of doing so. He was also given feedback on the connections he made with the text, and prompted to elaborate and discuss them, therefore improve his critical thinking skills. Feedback on his written work was related to his academic progress and included suggestions for improving his sentence structure, capitalization, and spelling.

Compared to other students in the class, Student A is exceptionally hard working and participates well in class. He independently assimilates new information with prior knowledge, and will immediately start applying a new strategy when he learns it. His decoding and spelling skills are weaker than most of the students in the class, but his reading comprehension and the

content of his writing are in the higher range. Compared to other 9th grade students in my resource classes, Student A struggles significantly more with reading and writing, but is equal to them in his ability to understand concepts. Reading and writing skills are significantly lower compared to 9th grade regular education students.

Student B did an excellent job underlining and annotating. This served as an excellent memory strategy for the unit. Student B also completed a pre-writing strategy to organize and sequence her writing. However, when it came time to assemble her paragraphs and essay as a whole, fluency was a problem. She has difficulty putting concepts into her own words, making her writing choppy and contrived. This indicates a weakness in her ability to generalize information and transfer skills from one learning assignment to the next. Thesis writing is another area of weakness, as it is hard for her to generate a statement that reflects the main idea of her essay. Student B did however, do an excellent job making personal connections with the text. This was illustrated in her essay; “Hope takes your mind of all bad troubles in the world. Hope helps people that have cancer by giving them strength.” This was in reference to a family member who is terminally ill with cancer.

In order to address Student B’s strengths and weaknesses, I plan to give her opportunities to transfer skills from this assignment to the next. She will be asked to continue to find the deeper meaning in text, and then encouraged to make a personal connection with it. She will also have additional practice in underlining and annotating. Additionally, I plan on encouraging her to use this strength in other subjects to help her with note taking and memory retention. In future writing assignments, she will practice putting ideas into her own words, improving sentence structure and fluency, and using transition words. The class will also be writing a persuasive essay, which will be an opportune time for working on thesis writing skills.

I gave feedback to Student B on an on-going basis to reinforce skills. I constantly asked her to tell me her thinking and then gave her clarifying, corrective, or positive feedback. Verbal praise for her annotating abilities encouraged her to participate more in class discussions, which is very helpful to her. Verbal and written feedback were related to her academic progress, including corrections, questioning, and praise for her hard work.

Compared to her classmates, Student B is one of the stronger decoders and spellers. She is less skilled in sentencing and struggles more than others in her ability to generalize information, transfer skills, understand directions, and retain information. Compared to other 10th grade students in my team taught 200 regular education English class, Student B is significantly lower in her critical thinking skills, memory retention, vocabulary, and expressing herself orally and in writing.

Task D.4 Commentary on Teaching

Through the implementation and completion of this unit, I learned several things about my instruction. I found that I am able to create learning tasks that meet both IEP and curricular goals, build upon students' prior learning and help advance them to develop language arts skills consistent with the regular education curriculum. The overall learning goal was an ambitious choice, but through careful planning I was able to break it down into realistic steps in order to meet the unique learning needs and styles of individual students. I also tried to anticipate tasks that may be difficult for them, such as transferring ideas into written expression and develop strategies to overcome their difficulties.

I was also able to monitor student learning through observation, questioning, and written work, and adjust instruction as necessary. For example, I observed students as they underlined and annotated and gave them feedback when appropriate. I evaluated their homework and essay for comprehension of concepts, and I added a hands-on activity to give the students a multi-modal approach to making connections with the text.

My lessons involved materials and activities that were appropriate, promoted critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of literature. During reading and writing activities I used questioning strategies to check comprehension, clarify and elicit further elaboration and thought development, lead, prompt, provide models, and allow students to share their thinking. Clear and precise expectations were given to students, as well as directions. Directions were given orally, and were either written on the board, or on handouts. Expectations were also clear on the thesis handout, the pre-writing handout, and editing checklist and student rubric.

I attempted to teach students skills through highly structured activities. I modeled and provided guided practice as necessary. Students were then expected to utilize these skills. The students did very well applying the reading strategies. Student B is an indicator of this, as she was able to retain an understanding of the characters and plot sequence from day to day, due in part from her repeated underlining and annotating. But when it came to making connections and writing, students were at very different levels and I need to continue to find an appropriate balance for support. I think that I need to keep in mind, however, that there is such a thing as too much support and I need to be cautious of this.

I had high expectations for student learning and I involved them in the process in order to share the responsibility. There was a positive momentum throughout the unit because the students were very involved in the learning process. They took the myth and made it meaningful to themselves. They felt that they fully understood it, and each student found a way to relate to it. This was one of the reasons why they worked so hard, and I think they were both proud and

amazed at the fact they were able to relate Zeus's concern of giving fire to the people on earth, to weapons of mass destruction. This shared responsibility seemed to flag in the editing stage of the essay writing. Again, I feel that finding a balance for support is necessary. I want them to use the student rubric and editing checklist to learn strategies on how to evaluate their own writing, instead of relying upon teacher feedback. One way I can do this, is to make my written feedback more concise and simplified.

Being prepared, clear expectations, color-coded materials, and engaging activities helped to maximize instruction time, and minimize off task behavior. This class is for the most part well behaved. One student has behavioral issues, as witnessed in Video Segment 1, but his behavior does not usually interfere with the learning of the other students. Students sometimes need to be redirected and appropriate behavior and preparedness (getting out appropriate materials) cued. The greater challenge is balancing students who are enthusiastic participants with those that are less extroverted. After watching my video segments, I felt that a greater emphasis needed to be placed balancing student participation and engaging those that are quieter, through further development of questioning strategies.

There are several aspects of the learning segment that I would like to change based upon student performance. I would like to give students more reading time to improve reading skills. After watching my video segment, I felt that I read for too long a time, and I should have had students alternately read paragraphs. I would spend more time having students write journals with their own personal responses to the myth. They should have an opportunity to discuss their thoughts about the characters and events, and write questions about what they do understand and what they don't understand.

Further changes to the unit include more time spent on identifying important themes in the story and much more time on thesis writing. More time should have been spent on transition words and in this case, more support would have been helpful, in the form of models for placement. A simplified and sequential editing checklist will be used in future lessons. I will also give them more proofreading strategies next time, and I am going to place a greater emphasis on student rubrics and editing checklist. I need to make sure that students understand what a valuable tool they are, and how they can help them improve their writing.

Information about student learning gathered from this unit will be shared with the appropriate school personnel. During each student's annual review, I will share pertinent information about his or her progress in reading and writing with the PPT. This information will be helpful in determining their placement for next year. I will also pass on information learned to their current reading strategies teacher, the speech and language pathologist and to their resource

and English teachers for next year. I will review their strengths and weaknesses with the appropriate teachers, explain to them the skills and concepts we covered, and what strategies they have learned to apply. For Student A, I will note his strength in making connections with the text and his need for customized editing strategies, such as a personalized editing checklist. For Student B, I will tell appropriate teachers about her strength in underlining and annotating, and how this is a good memory strategy that she can use across the curriculum. I also think it is important to check her comprehension and her work in progress, supply visual models, and rephrase directions and questions as necessary.

The design, implementation, and reflection on this unit has given me perspective on myself as a teacher. I think one of my greatest strengths is the knowledge I have of my students, and what they need to achieve. I constantly try to teach them strategies for success in a curriculum that parallels mainstream expectations. My goal is to create a classroom of independent learners who emerge at the end of the year with a repertoire of strategies that they can apply to life long learning. Furthermore, I feel that I do well in creating materials and lessons that are appropriate to a variety of ability levels and learning needs, especially when it comes to breaking tasks down into sequential steps. I have high expectations for my students. They recognize this, and it motivates them to try harder to meet those expectations. Above all, I have an underlying respect for my students as they struggle to overcome individual learning obstacles. I think that respect comes through in my teaching and it helps create an atmosphere of respect for oneself, others, and the learning process.